

Storm Drain Pollution and You

Even if you live miles from the Bay, you may be contributing harmful pollutants to coastal waters. Urban runoff is caused by chemicals and other materials that are poured or washed down storm drains. Unlike household sewer systems, storm drain pollution is NOT cleansed by sewage treatment plants - it flows directly through storm drains and out into Bay waters untreated. You, your friends and family all depend on healthy waterways and oceans.

Types Of Pollution

- Motor oil, pesticides, animal waste, automotive fluids, fertilizers, chemicals, and litter, all make their way into oceans every day.
- One quart of motor oil dumped down a storm drain can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water. Oil from one engine (4-6) quarts can cause an 8 acre slick. Every year 350 million gallons of used motor oil is discarded in storm drains, waterways, and soil. This is 30 times greater than the Exxon Valdez oil spill!
- Some wildlife get their water from polluted storm drains. Animals not only get sick from the water, but oil and gasoline stick to feathers and fur. When this happens, feathers and fur lose the ability to provide warmth for the animal.

What You Can Do

- **Recycle**
It takes 42 gallons of crude oil to make two and a half quarts of lubricating oil. The same two and a half quarts can be produced with half as much energy from only one gallon of recycled oil. Take used motor oil and antifreeze to a gas station or hazardous waste site that recycles these products. Recycle plastic, aluminum, and paper. Trash poses a threat to marine animals as they try to eat it or get trapped or tangled in the debris.
- **Reuse**
Rinse paint brushes in the sink. Filter and reuse paint thinner or brush cleaners. Dispose of used paint and thinners at the Household Hazardous Waste site at 1059 W. Hawthorne Street.
- **Reduce**
Use pesticides (look for nontoxic alternatives whenever possible) and fertilizers carefully and sparingly. Do not use if rain is forecast. Dispose of animal waste in garbage cans or toilets, not in storm drains. Wash cars with biodegradable, phosphate free detergent.

Remember to clean up all spills when they happen! If building materials or other wastes get into a gutter, storm drain, or creek call the Public Works Department immediately at (707) 441-4192 Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For after hour emergencies call Police Dispatch at (707) 441-4044.

